

BITTERNUT HICKORY

Carya cordiformis (Wangenh.) K. Koch.

OTHER COMMON NAMES: Swamp hickory, Pig hickory, Pignut, Bitter pecan tree, Bitter pignut, White hickory, Red-heart hickory.

FORM: Usually 50-75 feet high, diameter 1-2 feet, may reach a height of 100 feet, trunk long with little taper; crown round-topped, broadest near the top; lateral branches stout and ascending; small branches may be somewhat pendulous.

BARK: Light gray, rather thin, roughened by shallow fissures and narrow ridges, does not peel or shag off.

TWIGS: At first slender, smooth, glossy, often yellow glandular and hairy toward apex; later become grayish, orange-brown or reddish; at length light gray.

LEAVES: Alternate, 6-10 inches long, compound with 7-10 leaflets that are lanceolate to ovate-lanceolate, sharp-pointed at apex, finely toothed on the margin, obliquely tapering or heart-shaped at the base, dark yellow-green above, paler below.

FLOWERS: Appear when leaves are about half developed, monoecious; staminate green, in aments, 3-4 inches long; pistillate in small clusters on the new growth, about 1/2 inch long, somewhat angled and scurfy-hairy.

FRUIT: Egg-shaped or subglobose, 3/4-1 1/2 inches long, 4-winged along the sutures half way to the base, greenish-yellow, rough and finely hairy; husk thin; nut thin-shelled, reddish-brown; kernel very bitter.

WINTER BUDS: Covered by 4 yellowish, glandular dotted scales; terminal bud elongated, flattened, blunt-pointed.

WOOD: Heavy, hard, strong, tough, elastic, close-grained, dark brown.

USES: Tool handles, rough lumber, railroad ties, fuel, barbeque smoke. Historical uses: Wheel spokes.

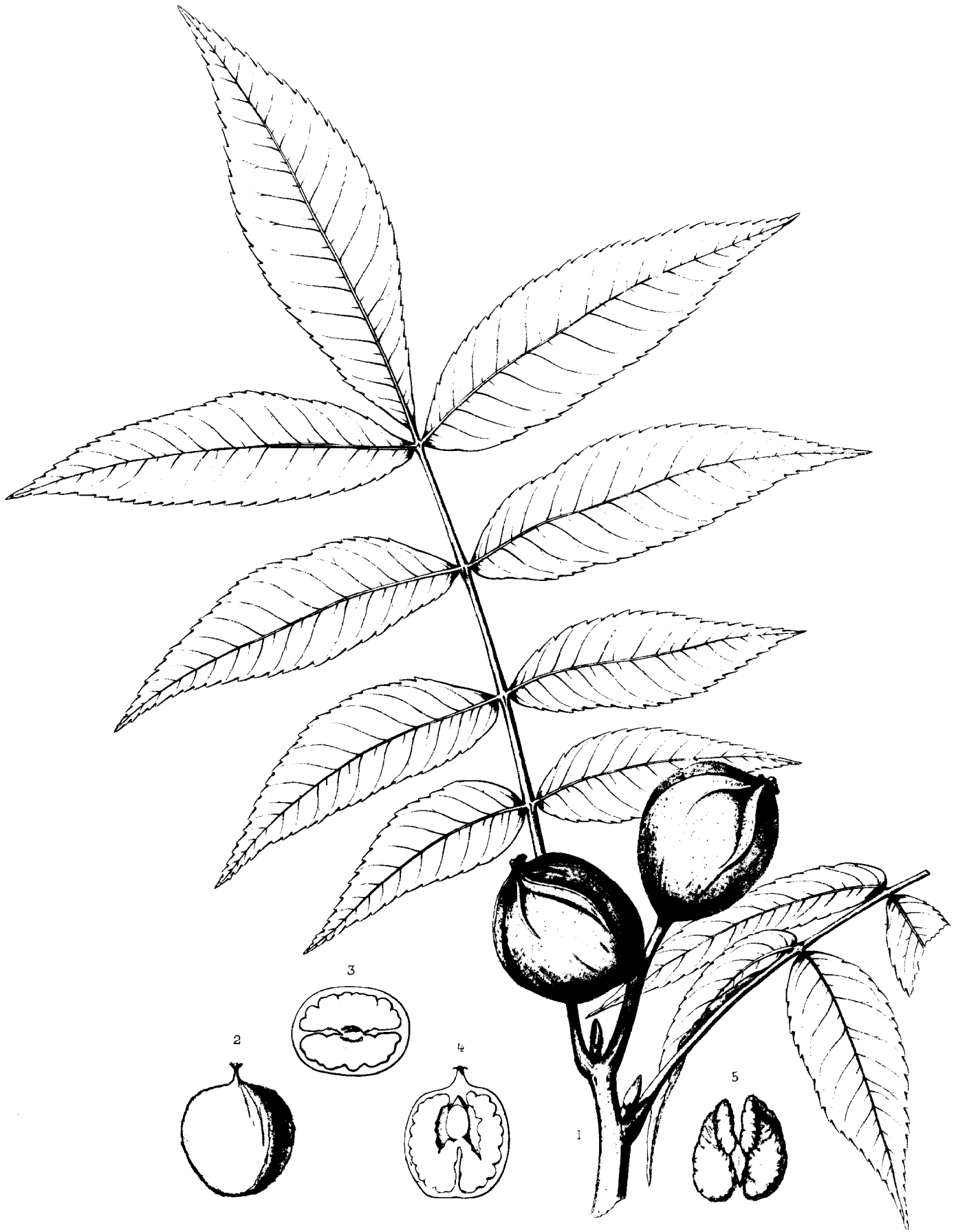
HABITAT: Prefers low, wet sites, along sluggish streams, occasionally on limestone outcroppings.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: Leaflets smaller than any native hickory, finely hairy on the underside; yellow buds, with 4-6 bud scales in valvate pairs; terminal bud flattened; lateral buds stalked and superposed; nut globular and thin-shelled.

DISTRIBUTION IN ALABAMA: Reported from Montgomery County and central part of the state, also from Dallas County.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE

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| 1. A fruiting branch | 4. Vertical section of a nut |
| 2. A nut | 5. An embryo |
| 3. Cross section of a nut | |



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